



***STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN BASIC ENGLISH ONLINE COURSE
IN THE BLOODBANK TECHNOLOGY STUDY PROGRAM***

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Abstract

This study aimed at elaborating the student engagement in Basic English online courses, by employing the cross-sectional survey design. The subject of this study was the first semester students of Diploma 3 of the Bloodbank Technology Study Program. The data were collected through a questionnaire that was distributed through Google Forms. The students' engagement was high on the skills, thoughts/emotions with the highest mean value of 4.39, participation with the mean value of 4.37, and performance items, with the mean value of 4.33. However, the communication issue became the least engaged activity with a mean value of 2.74.

Keywords: student engagement, online learning, blood bank technology

INTRODUCTION

There are numerous teaching and learning contexts for English classes, particularly English for Specific Purposes (ESP). There are both online and offline classes, but most English for Specific Purposes courses are held in a traditional classroom setting. We can talk about a broad range of audiences for a General English class, but we cannot talk about specific English classes available to a diverse group of students. According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987), there are numerous branches of English for Specific Purposes. They provided examples from a variety of ICT branches. The great umbrella term for the campus at Bhakti Setya Indonesia's Health Polytechnic must be in health education settings. There are already many branches available for the topic in the very own health topic setting. One of the branches is English for Medicine; however, it also has many other branches, such as English for Nursing, English for Pharmacy Technicians, English for Medical Record Clerks, English for Blood Banking, and so on.

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As early as the year 2020, the pandemic struck and made everybody on the earth struggling. They included teachers of English for Specific Purposes. English for Specific Purposes is also seen as an approach, not a product of teaching. However, the students of ESP rely so much on offline classes more than the online ones since many of them are from non-English departments. Then, when the pandemic struck, many schools and universities experienced closures which made the teaching and learning to be a shift to be online ones following the outbreak.

Many common developing countries have challenges in distance learning, not to mention lack of good internet connections as well as students' digital skills, then poor power supply, inaccessibility, distractions, and many others (Onyema et al., 2020; Sari, 2020). Indonesia is one of the many developing countries struck by the Coronavirus, yet the education also yielded to be conducted at home, or, we can also say as learning from home. Problems arose in digital learning or learning from home which hindered the learning process in the pandemic era, such as the lack of internet connection and quota (Sari, 2020; Rianto, 2020; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Agung et al., 2020).

Technology, according to Onyema et al., (2020), facilitates remote learning, distance learning, virtual learning, blended learning, mobile learning, distributed learning, machine learning, ubiquitous learning, deep learning, cooperative learning, and collaborative learning. As a result, from the beginning of the pandemic until now, online learning has been used to avoid school closures and failures in teaching. Moreover, (Dhawan, 2020) adds that online teaching and learning can be seen as a panacea for the crisis. According to Onyema et al. (2020), several factors affect the success of online education, including internet connections, learning software, digital skills, availability, and access to technology.

These skills assist learners not only in accessing the materials but also in maintaining interaction with lecturers and fellow students, resulting in greater engagement in the learning materials. Furthermore, (Onyema et al., 2020) stated that 36 platforms allow for online education. In the context of Poltekkes BSI, the lecturer uses four platforms that are familiar to the students, namely Youtube.com, TED-Ed,

Zoom.us, and WhatsApp. However, two additional platforms, Telegram and Edline, are used to add more variations.

Then, another problem which is also there was the unfamiliarity with the platforms that are provided and used by the campus. This led to another problem, that was related to student engagement. The LMS system recorded the number of student views in learning materials and tasks, however, those kinds of views were not observable. Then, there should be a specific assessment for the student engagement itself done later after the course ended. Although the LMSs were the only options used to overcome the learning problems that also needed a strong call for an offline class setting (Wong, 2013).

It is already known that issues of student engagement have always been discussed in both teaching and learning settings: offline and online settings. However, greater attention on student engagement must be put on the online settings since a lecturer cannot see their students in real-time (unless they use a video call tool every time they teach). On the other hand, the Basic English course is the prerequisite course for Advanced English course lessons which will be in the even semester. Without being able to master the Basic English course well, the students will not be able to succeed in the next semester's class.

It is risky to use the term "engagement" to refer to any interaction between students in an online classroom because the true nature of engagement must be viewed through several aspects of the learning process. Moore (1989; cited in Kennedy, 2020) stated that three types of interaction determine the types of student engagement in online environments: learner-instructor interaction, learner-learner interaction, and learner-content interaction. These three types of interactions are critical in an online learning environment because they determine whether learners or students are truly engaged with the course. Meaningful learning will not occur unless these types of interactions are integrated.

Moreover, Barkley, Matsushita, 2018) define the term student engagement as a process and a product that occurs on a dynamic process and is the result of a synergistic interaction between motivation and active learning. As the dynamic process occurs, by

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looking at the interactions as well as the product of the learning itself that occurred from the activities mentioned earlier.

The interaction of a learner with the content provided by the lecturer for their class' material will then add a new dimension to a new perspective. This type of interaction will also determine how active the students are in the classroom (Kennedy, 2020). These are the interactions that take place in an offline class that must be integrated into the course in terms of learner-instructor, learner-learner, and learner-content. Then, in the digital classroom, these kinds of interactions work well for determining students' overall engagement with the course.

Then, in the research done by Jonassen, 1988; Plowman, 1996, Cordova & Lepper, 1996, Kennedy, 2004, Domagk, Schwartz & Plass, 2010 (cit. Kennedy, 2020), two fundamental distinctions emerged, namely behavioral and cognitive engagement. Many things are done by students in the online learning environment that are related to these engagements. For example, in behavioral engagement, learners are observed based on how many learning behaviors they perform, such as clicking, navigating, submitting, scrolling, and viewing the course content, task, and quiz in the LMS context. Whereas cognitive engagement in an online learning environment reflects their deeper thinking about the learning material. According to the findings of this study, contracting the material or course content at a deeper level will help learners engage more in the course.

Students are asked to watch videos, access materials, and download them to read later at the most basic level of online learning cognitive activities (Kennedy, 2020). However, in the context of deeper learning, students must discuss and contribute their ideas about the material as the discussion becomes more intense, the interaction with all aspects: teacher/instructor, fellow students, and the materials (especially the material contents) will become deeper. Numerous challenges in distance learning are common in developing countries, including a lack of good internet connections as well as students' digital skills, as well as a lack of power supply, inaccessibility, distractions, and a variety of other factors (Onyema et al., 2020). These issues arose during the pandemic era because of digital learning or learning from home, which affected the learning process. Moreover, as mentioned by (Abla & Fraumeni, 2019), we must measure

student engagement to see whether our students were engaged in our lesson, more importantly, in our online lessons. Therefore, a study concerning the student engagement in online learning, especially in the English for Specific Purposes context in the Covid-19 pandemic era, was needed to be done not only to measure the engagement as an evaluation of the course but also as a tool to find better learning methods to be used in the following courses.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed the cross-sectional survey design, with a primary focus on the analysis of D3 Blood Bank Technology learner engagement for the Basic English course in Semester 1 in the academic year of 2020/2021. The technique was chosen since this study was done only in a very short time, yet it showed the descriptive description of the findings (Creswell, 2012). The student engagement measured in this study employed the type of students' self-report which was coined by Fredricks & McColskey (2012). The subjects of this study were D3 Blood Bank Technology students from classes 1 and 2 at the end of semester 1 of the 2020/2021 academic year. As a population, there were 83 students in total. However, there were only 70 people who responded to the questionnaire. Edline was used to monitor and grade student participation in the class program (Learning Management System). There was only one type of questionnaire, which was adopted from (Dixson, 2015) and distributed via Google Form.

The study adopted the whole instrument for measuring online classes' student engagement survey questions which were developed by Dixson (2015). Since learner engagement consists of many aspects from cognitive to emotional ones, the questions taken were adopted by considering many aspects from the student side instead of the teacher.

This study employed the cross-sectional survey design which was done by employing the following steps. The first stage in this study was identifying problems in the field, i.e., the problems faced in the online classes of Basic English. Problems were identified and elaborated. Then, the identified and elaborated problems were narrowed

down by finding problems that extremely needed to be investigated, i.e., the learner engagement in Basic English course. The delimited problems were then reduced into an important problem, i.e., the learner engagement in Basic English course. In this stage, data related to student engagement were collected through a questionnaire. There was only one type of questionnaire, adopted from (Dixson, 2015) and delivered through the Google form. Then, in the final stage, data were processed descriptively and interpreted based on the research question at the beginning of the study. However, since the aim of this study was to analyze the learner engagement in the Basic English's course, the data were then interpreted in the form of simple descriptive statistics and then explained.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Dixson (2015) developed a questionnaire to measure student engagement consisting of 19 questions. There were only 18 questions taken in the study since there were 2 similar questions and then only one of them was chosen. Then, the questionnaire was divided into 4 categories, namely skills, emotion, participation, and performance section.

To know which aspect of the online classroom was found to be effective, a descriptive analysis employing the mean values was conducted. This was done mainly because it is important which item was favorable so that it could be used to evaluate the activities observed and applied in the course during the online classes in the pandemic era. The question recapitulation can be viewed in the following table.

Table 1. Student answers mean value on skills items

Question Number	Question	Mean Value
1	Make sure to study regularly	3.67
2	Staying up on the readings	4.06
3	Looking over class notes between getting online to make sure I understand the material	4.06
4	Being organized	3.63
5	Taking good notes over readings, PowerPoints, or video lectures	3.79
6	Listening/reading carefully	4.23

Based on the analysis of the mean value, the students agreed that they could learn to listen or read carefully through the online class. It has the highest mean value, i.e. 4.23. Following the receptive skills questions, they also agreed that the materials learned through the online classes helped them keep their reading pace as well as keep them checking their notes to help them understand the day's material and task. These items have the same mean value; i.e. 4.06. Then, the students agreed that they were engaged in the materials that made them take good notes over readings, PPTs, or video lectures so that they can make themselves sure to study regularly. They also believed that by learning online they could learn to be organized. This result was in line with the result of the study done by (Agung et al., 2020); which found that the students enjoyed learning with the materials given to them. This also showed that the students were engaged in the learning and materials given by the teacher.

The students agreed the most that the materials and activities given in the classes of *Basic English's* course that they could learn to listen or read carefully. It is true that most of their materials were reading pieces. In most of the meetings, video lessons were also given to overcome the student's connection problems when they were in synchronous classes. They were then asked to do tasks that made them engaged in readings, including the ones they were given in the class. The students were also given a task every meeting to evaluate their learning. These tasks were also used to assess their learning and engagement in the online classes. This finding was in line with (Suharti et al., 2021); i.e., which have also found that most of the students in their study also listened and read the English material carefully. This showed the positive characteristics for the student engagement; the students were all active in the learning sessions.

Table 2. Student answers mean value on emotional items

Question Number	Question	Mean Value
1	Putting forth effort	4.37
2	Finding ways to make the course material relevant to my life	3.33
3	Finding ways to make the course interesting to me	4.10
4	Desiring to learn the material	4.39

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In the questions regarding the students' feelings toward the online class, they agreed that they wanted to learn the materials given in every meeting. This was shown by having the highest mean value, i.e., 4.39. Being motivated to learn, was also found as another predictor for effective engagement in a study by Ergün & Adıbatmaz (2020). These motivated students were found to have higher engagements in the course. Following this item, the students also felt that by learning in this course, they put great effort to learn English. Not only put greater effort to learn, but they also found ways to make the course more interesting to them. We know that online learning with asynchronous meetings needs greater effort for teachers to assess or evaluate the students and the learning process. It was also shown in the data that online learning needs to be improved more to help the students find the relevance of the materials in their real or daily life.

Table 3. Student answers mean value on participations items

Question Number	Question	Mean Value
1	Having fun in online chats, discussions, or via email with the instructor or other students	3.83
2	Participating actively in small-group discussion forums	3.90
3	Helping fellow students	4.03
4	Engaging in conversations online (chat, discussions, email)	3.99
5	Posting in the discussion forum regularly	2.74
6	Getting to know other students in the class	4.24

The next topic evaluated was the students' participation. This was one of the most highlighted and investigated topics in this study. Participation had the least attention because of the limitation in online learning media, for instance, Telegram, YouTube, and link. The students agreed upon the course helped them to get to know each other in the class. The mean value for this item had the highest value, namely 4.24. This showed that they agreed that they could know each other through the course. They also agreed that they could help each other in the class discussions. The mean value was the second-highest for this category, i.e., 4.03.

The students also agreed that they could participate in the class activities by engaging in online conversations through chat and discussions in the class forum.

Although not all of them were engaged in intense conversation with the teacher and fellow students, they agreed that replying to greetings, as well as answering class questions could be a sign that shows their participation. Then, they also agreed that they showed participation in small group discussion forums. This was shown in their task results. Some of their tasks were in group type. They chose their group and then submitted their task. The record of their tasks exists in the LMS. This was consistent with the findings in the study done by (Fazza & Mahgoub, 2021) in which the students found that online interactions could be done in several mediums, one of which is the chat box provided in the learning management system; then, in the students' point of view, they suggested to be given more time, practice, as well as technology to master the digital tools presented in the video conference tool or the learning management system.

The students also enjoyed having fun in online chats with the teacher and other students. They showed their fun side when the teacher-initiated fun conversations with them. Then, in Telegram, they could make use of funny emoticons to show their feelings. Other students were also able to reply with emoticons matching their feelings. The last item to be put attention to was the eagerness of the students to post in the discussion forum regularly. They rarely initiated questions regarding the materials or just questions such as the ones used to just initiate a light chit-chat. They tend to only reply to questions sent in the forum or discussion initiated by the teacher. A similar result was also found in the study done by (Willms et al., 2009) in which one of the findings showed that students were engaged more in the classroom if they have positive interactions with other students as well as with the teacher. (Gray & Diloreto, 2016) also found similar data possibility in their research; i.e., students probably will increase their learning capacity once they had enough interactions with one another.

Table 4. Student answers mean value on performance items

Question Number	Question	Mean Value
1	Getting a good grade	3,59
2	Doing well on the tests/quizzes	4,33

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The last one, regarding the performance in the class, the students agreed that they did well on the tests/quizzes in the class activities. This was shown that this category has the highest mean value, i.e., 4.33. This result was also found in the study done by (Suharti et al., 2021) that the point of doing well in quizzes or tests as well as getting good scores in English disclosed students' cognitive engagement in English online classes. In the LMS used by Poltekkes BSI, the link, students must do a task every meeting to assess their learning. Most of the students also submitted their work there, too. A quiz was given once every three meetings in the form of multiple-choice items. They also participated well in this and got high scores for their grades.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings and discussion that most of the students' learning behavior observed in the whole course participation were high on four aspects, namely the skills, thoughts/emotions with the highest mean value of 4.39, participation with the mean value of 4.37, and performance items, with the mean value of 4.33. However, the communication issue done by posting in the forum regularly became the least engaged activity of the students with the mean value of 2.74. These items were related to student engagement in a course, although these observed behaviors needed to be investigated in further studies to make more generalized results.

It is hoped that through this research, routine evaluation or assessment in online classes program following this research should be done because online learning is still the main medium in learning in this pandemic era. Then, it is hoped that a more detailed aspect of student engagement should be investigated to get a more comprehensible yet generalizable result.

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